

The CASTLE OF LIES

BY ARTHUR HENRY VASEY

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CHAPTER XXIX.

I Open the Safe.

"It is true," she murmured. "It is true, and so horrible." "I said obstinately, 'It is impossible.'"

"Can one deny a fact? Am I a child to be soled with smooth words? I have seen; I must believe, though God knows the truth makes me wish a hundred times that I lay beside my poor disgraced brother."

It is always painful to see one whom we respect the prey of an emotion uncontrolled. It was doubly painful for me to see this strong woman, whose dominant quality was courage and calm, writhe under the blow that deprived her for the moment of all power to think coherently. I dared not tell her my belief that I held the combination of the safe, and that before many minutes were passed I might have the papers in my possession.

The woman who tortured us both stood at the threshold of the little room Helena had just left, a malevolent figure in her hour of triumph. As I looked toward her, tempted to expel her brutally from that room, and if my surmise was false, to force from her, even by violence, if necessary, the combination of the safe, she withdrew hastily, leaving Helena and myself alone. It was then that I feared the worst. She had appealed to Helena. She was confident of her success.

Still I held Helena's hands tightly in mine. I wished to give back to her her peace, her calm courage.

"Mr. Haddon," she whispered presently, "do you think—is it possible—to do this thing?"

"It is possible; but it would be the act of a madman and a liar," I said gently.

"You say it is possible." She withdrew her hands almost roughly. Her voice was monotonous and harsh. "Then you will save us, mother and myself, from this deep disgrace."

"There is no service that I would do for you, Miss Brett, that would bring you peace and happiness."

"Peace! Happiness!" she interrupted, with fierce remonstrance. "I do not look for peace or happiness. Honor itself—and the motto of the Bretts is 'Honor, My Sword'—can no longer be our proud boast. But if silence can be purchased it must be. I dare not let my brother's name be held in reproach. I dare not, I cannot, for his mother's sake, let it be known that he has been false to England."

"We may yet save him if—"

"Yes," she broke in with a strange exultancy that was even more dreadful to me than her despair, "and it is you whom I have despised that is to save us. A life for a life—these were the words I said to you at Lucerne. Now it is to be dishonor for dishonor. I am asking you a terrible sacrifice. I am dragging you with me to the depths. But there is no other to help us. Say that you will."

"Your grief rebuffs you of your reason," I said gently. "Escape is not to be found in that way. It is the last hope of a desperate and unscrupulous adventurer, who has herself little hope of success. It is her last card, and she will lose nothing by playing it. But we, you and I, we risk everything."

"Ah, you refuse! You are afraid of the risks. I might have known you would be afraid. That woman said that it was hopeless to ask a service so heroic from one who was a proven— Oh, forgive me, I did not mean to say that."

"Miss Brett, I think there is no disgrace I would not gladly endure to help you. I swore to rescue your brother's honor if it were possible. If I could do so now, though I sacrificed myself, I tell you I would. More than that, though every instinct tells me that I should fail, I will do what you ask even now."

"Heaven bless you!" She cried brokenly.

"But first of all I want you to realize clearly just what you are asking. I want you to be quite sure that you are not adding dishonor to dishonor in asking me to do this thing. No; it is not that I am afraid. I have not that kind of fear. But I think that neither of us should be so cowardly as to yield to this woman's demands. In the oratory yonder lies your brother. Ask yourself, when you see him, if it is merely the merciful hand of death that has smoothed his forehead, or whether the calm and serenity is that of a man who held the motto of his house, 'Honor, My Sword.'"

"This appeal was perhaps not wholly sincere. One cannot deny facts because one wishes to. It still seemed to me that it must be true that Sir Mortimer was proven guilty of taking bribes."

Nor did I dare tell Helena now of my wild conjecture. I dared not raise her hopes at the risk of a speedy disillusionment. Once the papers were in my possession, together we could defy Madame de Varner. And if disappointment was to be mine I hoped that by the bier of her brother Helena

would recover her courage and clear vision.

Again I was alone. But Madame de Varner had awaited the result of Helena's intercession, now came to ward me. "I saw with a thrill of thankfulness that the door of the room of the safe was not closed."

"You told me that it would be for her to decide," she said confidently. "I know that she has decided. And your own decision? Does your resolution falter?"

"You are mistaken," I began to pace the floor with rapid steps, advancing nearer and nearer to the room of the safe. "She has not yet decided. I believe with all my heart that she will refuse. She is in your oratory there. She will gain strength from the presence of the dead to defy you."

"Perhaps," sneered the woman. She seated herself near the table slightly turned from the room she had left.

An instant and I had gained it, and drawn the bolt. Another and I was on my knees, my fingers tremblingly whirling about the shining surface of the little knob that controlled the combination.

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I whirled it this way and that, then pulled at the handle.

It resisted my efforts. A cold perspiration broke out on my forehead. I had been a victim of my own madness.

But again I moved the knob; this time slowly, with infinite care, with the calmness that comes with despair.

It yielded to my touch. The safe was open.

I saw no papers of any sort in the large compartment. It was empty with the exception of a jewel case. I slipped out a drawer, the only one in the safe. Two packets were there.

I seized them greedily. I was about to open them, when a shadow fell across the room. There was a light step behind me. I looked up, the papers in my hand.

Captain Forbes was standing by my side.

"He had made his entrance through the open window."

"Good evening, Sir Mortimer!" I rose to my feet, starting at him stupefied.

"I am sorry if my abrupt and unceremonious entrance has alarmed you," he said mockingly, and regarded me with a cold smile.

"You have managed to escape?" I stammered.

"Exactly, and I hope I do not inconvenience you. With your permission, sir, I will withdraw the bolt. This little room reminds me too well of the one I have just left. It is too cramped for my taste."

He brushed by me brusquely and drew the bolt. I thrust the papers in my breast pocket. With one motion I closed the safe softly, and turned the knob.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Trapped.

Captain Forbes passed into the larger room. I followed him slowly.

ners to which the king has been invited are, however, likely to be put more than at their wit's ends to meet royal wishes than are the guests. The invitation must state at what hour the dinner is to begin and at what hour it will end, and both beginning and ending must be at the moment designated. After the table has been laid and the arrangements have been completed, the work is inspected by one of the king's officers, who frequently insists upon important changes in the plans. He makes certain that the king will be seated so as to be free from drafts, noises and other disturbing influences.

The host or hostess is not permitted to provide wine for the king, provided wine is to be served at the meal. This is furnished by the king himself and is taken to the place by a royal servant. Sometimes the king and other members of the royal family also furnish their own cigars. The servant who has charge of the wines stands behind the king during the meal and attends to his wants. The host or hostess must also submit a copy of the menu for official inspection and it is important that certain dishes for which members of the royal family have a predilection shall be served.

In setting the table care must be taken that two knives are not placed at the king's plate at one time. At all of the Buckingham palace dinners guests' knives are placed at each guest's place with every course and this rule is rigidly enforced at all dinners in the palace, wherever the king seats himself, as the one inexcusable offense is to keep his majesty waiting. Considering these conditions, perhaps we are fortunate in not being required to entertain royalty often here in America.

"Ah, that's better," he sighed. "Now I am among friends." His sardonic smile took in Madame de Varner and myself, who had not yet recovered from our astonishment.

Indeed, it was rather embarrassing that he held me speechless. Presently he would know that it was not Sir Mortimer whom he had surprised at the safe. And knowing that, it was inevitable that he mistake me for one of the conspirators. First of all at Vitznau—I had taken dispatches from his hand. Had I indeed been really under the influence of an opiate I might have urged that as the reason. I could have said that I was not conscious of any deception; I was simply a victim of Dr. Starva and Madame de Varner, and not responsible for my actions.

But not only had I not taken the opiate, but Madame de Varner knew that I had not, and even had I wished to tell the lie she would have contradicted me.

And now he had caught me red-handed at the safe. He would draw his conclusions swiftly. It would be absurd to suppose that I should know the combination of the safe, merely as Madame de Varner's guest. A hostess does not vouchsafe to her guests the key of her strong box. If I were not Sir Mortimer, I must be in league with Madame de Varner and Dr. Starva.

That was the conclusion he must arrive at. To tell him the absolute truth—that by one chance out of ten thousand I had stumbled on the combination—would only deepen his conviction as to my guilt.

And Helena? What would she think? Would her faith in me be so strong that she would believe me? Had Captain Forbes not surprised me at this moment my guessing of the riddle of the safe would have seemed miraculous indeed, but the fact that I had the papers, and could place them in her hands to be destroyed, would support my story readily enough.

But I dare not give to her these papers before Captain Forbes and Madame de Varner. It seemed to me that the king's messenger of all per-

sons must not know of Sir Mortimer's guilt. For though the papers, the proof, was in our possession, the fact remained. And if Captain Forbes knew that I was not Sir Mortimer, but an impostor, would he not demand those papers? And having them, would he not read them?

And Madame de Varner? To what extremes would she not go in her rage? Now she believed that in some way I had been cognizant of Captain Forbes's escape, and had gone to the room containing the safe to give him assistance. But when she knew, as she must presently, that I had taken the papers from the safe I could not doubt that she would not submit meekly. She would have her revenge, both on Helena and on myself. She would insist on telling Captain Forbes of Sir Mortimer's guilt.

He would demand from me the papers and my cleverness would have gone for nothing. For the mind of Forbes moved in an obstinate channel. Duty to him was a soldier's first impulse. In doing what he thought his duty, he would sacrifice all. Not Helena's tears, nor my own entreaties, would prevent him from hurrying back to Downing street with the proofs of Sir Mortimer's guilt.

For some seconds after we had reached the large anteroom, the three of us stood like so many wax figures. Each of us had ample reason to feel ill at ease.

"I have the honor to report to your Excellency," said Forbes at length, in a voice that was admirably controlled, despite his indignation, "that the second dispatch—a dispatch of profound importance, as I warned your Excellency at Vitznau—was stolen from me last night. May I express the hope

that your Excellency has received it?"

"No," I said calmly. It was time to put an end to this game of cross-purposes.

"Then possibly madam can enlighten you as to its whereabouts."

"I, your Excellency? Oh, no!" She swept me a mocking courtesy. "I am not so deeply in your Excellency's counsel."

"My patience, Sir Mortimer," cried Forbes, breaking into direct speech, "has its limits. I see you at Lucerne only with the greatest difficulty. I warn you of the grave purport of a dispatch which I am unable to deliver to you because of your condition. The morning, when I would see you, you have disappeared again. I trace you here with difficulty. When for the third time I attempt to deliver this dispatch, I am held captive; the dispatch is forcibly taken from me. When I ask you if you have received it, you give me an indifferent answer. I dare not believe that you are so far lost to your sense of duty that you countenance these violent acts of a bandit. But I must insist."

He paused abruptly. I thought it because he realized that his anger had carried him too far. But when I looked where he looked, I saw Helena Brett.

"Miss Brett!" he exclaimed in pained surprise, "I am sorry to see you here."

"And I am infinitely relieved, though bewildered, to find you, Captain Forbes," she extended him her hand, smiling wanly.

"But you will help me to make your brother realize the danger of further misunderstanding," he said gently, his anger at his indifference vanishing at sight of her pale and haggard countenance.

"My brother, Captain Forbes, is dead. He lies in that room," she answered firmly, though her lips trembled.

She had made her decision. She, too, was determined at all hazards not to act a lie.

As for Captain Forbes, he was dumb with astonishment. His eyes widened with dismay and concern. But though he did not speak his startled glance dwelt on me.

"Mr. Haddon is my loyal friend," said Helena, interpreting his look. At the same time she reassured me with a quiet smile that more than her words expressed her trust.

A slow flush of anger mounted to the temples of the king's messenger. He towered over me menacingly.

"You have dared tamper with his Majesty's business. You have tricked one of his servants. By Heaven, you will rue it dearly!"

"Captain Forbes!" Helena laid her hand on his sleeve in her distress.

"Madam!" He turned on her indignantly. "This man has deliberately passed himself off as your brother. He tricked me into giving him important papers of state. You know that, and you defend him? You dare call him friend?"

"I did not know that," she replied firmly. "But I dare call him friend, Captain Forbes. You do not understand."

"Understand!" he stormed, before I could make any reply myself. "I understand this only too well: he is in league with a notorious woman, and the still more infamous Dr. Starva, two vulgar adventurers of the most dangerous type. I think that is enough. That he has obtained under false pretenses my dispatches convicts him of high treason. He will not leave my sight until he is placed under arrest."

"I am an American," I said quietly. "You may find it more difficult to do that than you imagine."

My mild expostulation maddened him only the more.

"An American?" He advanced to me as if to lay hands on me. "Do you flatter yourself that your nationality leaves you free to play the spy and traitor with impunity? Give me those papers."

He came a step nearer. Instinctively I placed my hands at my breast pocket as if to protect the precious papers. But again Helena, distressed at his violence, restrained him.

"Captain Forbes," she pleaded, "pray restrain your anger. It is natural that you should feel the deepest suspicion against Mr. Haddon. But if you will be patient, I am sure he will make all clear to you."

"Miss Brett," he said sternly, "this is a man's work. It is hardly becoming in you to defend one who has traduced your brother's honor. How dare you claim an impostor like this as a friend? He must be indeed a clever villain to have so deceived you."

"Mr. Haddon has done enough," she answered proudly, "to justify my faith in him. And let me tell you, Captain Forbes, that I believe in his word so much that I have given him my word that he may do as he pleases. I shall neither question his motives nor interfere with any action of his. Nor shall I permit another to act on my behalf."

Indignation and surprise fought for mastery, as Forbes answered with resolution.

"I shall refuse to obey you, Miss Brett. You forget that it is not yourself who have been wronged so much as Sir Mortimer and myself. Now, sir, give me those papers that you took from the safe."

For the first time Madame de Varner, shocked into rigid attention, spoke. Her surprise at the demand forced from her a contemptuous defense of herself.

"You are mad!" she cried involuntarily.

"You see, Miss Brett," exclaimed Forbes, with satisfaction, "his accomplice defends him."

(Continued on Page Fourteen.)



"C-O-W-A-R-D."

TEMPERANCE DEPARTMENT

CONDUCTED BY W. C. T. U.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

MISS FRIEDA DRESSEL,

MRS. U. WAY.

A PUSH IN TIME.

Mrs. Kent spoke hurriedly, looking down from her doorway at the boy who, after a run across the fields, was fanning himself with his straw hat.

"Of course, I can't prevent your inviting him to your camp, Ralph—and I can't absolutely forbid his going; Otis is old enough now to decide for himself. But I do wish would have your headquarters for fun somewhere else than on Otis Mill Hill."

"There's no place in town can hold a candle to it," declared Ralph impatiently. "There's boating, shooting, fishing and all kinds of larks within a minute's reach, and the boys needn't go there unless they like. Honestly, Mrs. Kent, if we fellows haven't brains enough to keep straight in spite of a little temptation, do you think we're worth saving? And what's a drink of sweet cider, anyway?"

"It's the first step, a easy beginning," Ralph Thayer, I'm going to tell you something I've never spoken of yet to a living person—she opened a small locket hanging from a chain around her neck—do you know this picture?—no, it isn't Otis; it's his father, taken at the age Otis is now. You've heard all your life that he died of consumption—most people in the village believe it, but it isn't true. He died of—yes, Ralph, he died of drink. And now you know what I fear for Otis."

"Hello, old man," called a cheery voice, as Ralph walked away from the door. "Stand and deliver the matter that wrinkle thy classic brow! When is the shiny of yours at the camp coming off? Don't say this afternoon, because I've got to drive to the station for Ethel and her four hundred and thirty-seven trunks."

"Sure, it's this afternoon," returned Ralph absently, staring at his chum. Otis was bareheaded and banished a couple of racquet aloft. He was a handsome lad, with a bright, delicate, likeable face—no other lad in school was so popular as Otis Kent. But Ralph saw him now under the shadow of a threatening something that made him turn his eyes away. It couldn't be that this brilliant, light-hearted fellow would ever come to—that! The thought was monstrous.

"This afternoon it is then. I think you might have consulted your uncle about the date, but you needn't look so sheepish over it," laughed Otis. "I'll look after the girl and the trunks and be with you as soon as I can."

The meeting at the camp was at 2 o'clock. All the boys of the Featherhead club—such was its suggestive name—were there except Otis Kent and Ralph pacified the company by telling them that the missing member would soon be along. The camp was a shanty of boards built on the top of a high hill overlooking the river. The slope toward the river fell away sharply, but the other side of the hill was a succession of long, easy rises covered with orchard lands belonging to neighboring farms. Loads of newly gathered apples were creeping up the winding road to the cider mill at the edge of the woods near by.

"Hooray, here's the vintage—come on, boys!" cried Charlie Wendell, capering around a bunch on which a keg stood in the shade of a low-branching oak tree at the back of the camp. "Nice lad, to have it all ready for us, all cool and ripe—"

"Polite little boys always wait till the refreshments are passed, 'round," suggested Ralph, holding the caperer neatly over the bench and rolling him into a convenient bed of burdock.

"The target practice comes first, fellows; no use waiting for Otis for that—he can't hit anything but a tennis ball. Here's a prize for the best—a silver arrow to proclaim the prowess of the winner."

The voice came in the midst of an exciting contest, all talking at once as if it were a contest of tongues instead of firearms. But all the time Ralph was thinking so deeply that he hardly heard them. The winsome face of his friend seemed to hover before him in the sunny air, and always above it there was the threatening shadow. But, after all, he must let Otis live his own life. He couldn't, if he would, guard all the steps of his way. Temptation to drink was everywhere—the only thing to do was to face and overcome it. And a glass of sweet cider—what was that to make a fuss about? "The easy beginning," Mrs. Kent had said. Pahaw, that was the cry of women and weaklings!

"Look here, Ralph of the stony heart!" Charlie Wendell, with a drowsy plaintive face, was holding up the silver arrow he had won—"can you longer refuse to pledge your glorious knight in the contests of that keg? A toast would be no more than polite, if you're bound to go in for manners."

Ralph did not answer. He was looking away down the hill at a light athletic figure swinging about the road to the accompaniment of a cheerful whistle. The memory of that pictured face in the locket came to him with the suddenness of a revelation. Once that other boy, Otis's father, had looked like that—cheerful and young and strong—hadn't he held him back from that doom? Ralph's mental conflict ended all at once. He turned and quietly put his foot under the bench that held the keg. And keg together went bounding and bumping down the steep side of the hill into the river, and the host of the party wheeled about and faced his guests with steady eyes.

"Hello, the reformers have roped in another man!"

"The chief of the Featherheads is on the water wagon!"

Some of the exclamations were bantering, some amusing, some sneering; but Ralph's eyes kindled as he confronted them.

"Look here, fellows," he said firmly, "that's the last cider you'll ever see in this camp while I own it. You may say there's no harm in it—perhaps not, for most of us—though you can't be sure. I've always said let everybody fight his own battles, and that it was all balderdash to talk about it being our duty to keep temptation away from other folks. But suppose you knew for certain there was danger for one of us in that keg—for one

of us, mind you!"—his eyes turned unconsciously to that figure coming up the hill—"would you want to be the first to offer it to him? If so, somebody's standing on shivering ground at the edge of a cliff, do you want it to be your fault if he takes the first step?"

There was a startled silence for a moment. The boys had not looked for such sudden earnestness, but perhaps they guessed something of the hidden meaning of Ralph's words. Otis's whistle sounded nearer and his bright face appeared through the hanging boughs of the oak tree. Charlie Wendell stuck the arrow upside down in the front of his sweater and stepped to Ralph's side, holding aloft the club banner which he had picked up.

"What the chief says, goes," he declared, cheerfully. "I can call on all right-minded Featherheads to rally round the flag and stand by their leader."

There was a moment's pause, and then, with a rush, the whole club was massed around Ralph and Charlie, and Otis Kemp, coming up, looked at them with laughing inquiry.

"What new kind of mystic rite has been going on behind my back?" he demanded. "Is it a vow of friendship or of vengeance?"

"Of friendship, comrade," answered Ralph—The Crusader Monthly.

GOVERNMENT BY WHISKEY.

We hear a good deal about "government by injunction," government by a plutocracy, government by labor unions, government by a mob—and so on. But Governor Folk hit the bull's eye recently in a speech in Topeka, Kansas, where he said something like this:

"The fight now going on in nearly every state is to restore the government to the people. Have you a government by the people in Kansas, or have you a government by the liquor interests? If any of you are under the impression that you, the people, rule in this state, you had better look around you to find that you are mistaken. You, the people of Kansas, have ordered in your constitution and laws that no liquor shall be sold in this state. The jointkeepers have overruled your constitution and set at naught your statutes. You, the people, have declared that liquor shall not be sold. The jointists have declared that it shall be sold. Who is the superior in authority—the people or the jointkeepers?" At the present time the jointkeepers are on top. They are running right here in Topeka, the capital of your magnificent commonwealth. They are open, insolent, arrogant and impudent in their lawlessness. They not only break your laws and operate

in defiance of your authority, but, with amazing insolence, they try to run your politics as well. They are telling you for whom to vote in this county. If you want liquor sold in Kansas, they let the law forbidding it be repealed. If you don't want it sold, then elect officials who will enforce the law. If there is not enough power under the existing statutes to maintain the dignity of the state and uphold the laws, those in authority can at least tell you what additional power they want and have you give it to them, to the end that outlaws be effectually suppressed. It's up to you to either enforce the law or acknowledge that the jointkeepers have you whipped, and repeal the law. Governor Folk said that is the end toward which patriotic men should strive."

What Governor Folk said about Kansas is true of all other states in the union. Liquor sellers are persistent violators of law. Even where the laws are strict, they are able to get around them. It is not to be expected that they do not hesitate to violate them, and where prohibitory laws prevail they strain every nerve to elect officials who will not enforce them—Peoples Popular Monthly.

W. C. T. U.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union met at Miss Chapman's, 2123 Adams avenue. Mrs. Montgomery, superintendent of contest work, spoke on getting up and drilling a class from the Christian and Abrahamic churches or schools. It was left in the hands of the local superintendent.

The state president, Mrs. E. Shepard, spoke about her work in the state, which was very much appreciated; also the life work of Frances Willard and of Abraham Lincoln. Very tasty refreshments were served to about thirty members and their friends.

GREAT REJOICING.

Not only does the Southland rejoice, but from all over the nation is heard the sound of praise and thanksgiving that Tennessee has passed the bill for state-wide prohibition by such a decided vote, the voice voting 20 to 13, and the senate 62 to 36. Even the governor's veto has proved to have little weight, and the good men of Tennessee, for they have passed the bill over his veto, and another state has been added to the roll of honor. Great is the rejoicing of the "state-widlers."

ANOTHER CLASS TURNED DOWN.

The press dispatches have made glad the hearts of the temperance hosts by announcing that President-Elect William Howard Taft has joined Emperor William in the ranks of total abstainers. Mr. Taft believes that he can ward off the strain and pressure of public life better by refusing alcoholic beverages.

STRAWS IN THE WIND.

It is estimated that if all the saloons closed in the United States since January 1, 1908, there were placed side by side, allowing twenty-five feet front to each, it would make a solid row of saloons more than fifty miles long—Crusader Monthly.

Marxian Club Socialists

Any question concerning Socialism answered. Address all communications to K. S. Hilliard, 436 Herrick Avenue.

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And inasmuch as most things are produced by labor, it follows that all such things of right belong to those whose labor has produced them. But it has so happened, in all ages of the world, that some have labored, and others have without labor enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong, and should not continue. To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government.—Abraham Lincoln.

RELIGION, SOCIALISM.

The Socialist is the most religious of men. The man who bows, "Be good! be good! be good!" and strains to keep up the material conditions that render goodness impossible, or who does nothing to overthrow such material conditions—such a man is the most irreligious of men. The Socialist labors to bring about material conditions that make goodness possible. All others are "atheists" in the worst sense that the word ever conveyed.

THE CASE OF AZEF, THE RUSSIAN SPY OF THE CZAR.

Disclosures have been made in Russia of a most diabolical nature. In Russia, as in other countries there are people distasteful "to the powers that be," who are not of the revolutionary order, and who are not to get rid of them was conceived and executed by the secret police of Russia, who were hand and glove with the czar and his favorites. They had this man Azef join the revolutionists, binding himself by their oaths and inflaming their minds against the czar, whom the government wished out of the way—planning and carrying into effect the acts of assassination by bomb-throwing. Azef keeping the police informed of the plots, the police allowing it to go on until after the explosion and the capturing the poor deluded enthusiasts, who went to their death thinking they had done their fellow a service. The following from the Weekly People, tells its own tale:

"Russia's Latest Message."

"The case of Azef" is meant for thought, for plenty of thought, for thought, and thought again.

The